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SUBJECT: CG Juba Round-up - March 10

REF: Khartoum 00482

¶1. The following is a round-up of recent events in Juba and Southern Sudan. This cable covers SSDF clashes outside of Abyei, banditry in Yuai, continued disarmament in Jonglei, SSDF Warlord Gabriel Tang beginning peace talks, a land dispute in Bentiu, Multi-Donor Trust Fund activities, women's day celebrations in Juba, and a meeting with a British NGO training local police.

SSDF Clash Outside Abyei

¶2. According to UNMIS, two factions of the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) clashed on March 7 northeast of Abyei, leaving 22 dead. Just over 1,000 of Paulino Matip's former SSDF forces, now aligned with the SPLA, were attacked during a deployment from Khartoum to Abyei. The troops, traveling late at night, proceeded despite SAF warnings that the area was unsafe and were ambushed by an SSDF militia group loyal to Gordon Kong. In addition to the 22 dead, several officers were captured. The SAF was not involved in the fight, although some SPLA sources said the SAF should be held responsible, because Gordon Kong has declared his alignment with the SAF under the terms of the CPA (issue also addressed in septel).

Banditry in Jonglei

¶3. Nine Nuer cattle herders were killed at a watering hole outside of Yuai by Murle militia, according to Jean Luc Joc, Government of Southern Sudan (GoSS) Minister for Youth Culture and Sports. Joc, a native of Jonglei state, told CG Juba officials that he had just returned from a tour of the security situation in Jonglei, which he said was improving. Joc explained that the incident was unrelated to the heavy fighting in Jonglei last month, but touched on the same issues (reftel).

Disarmament Moves Ahead

¶4. Joc also said that the White Army militias and Nuer cattle herders involved in last month's fighting had now agreed to disarm, and would hand over weapons to their local chiefs. Once disarmed, the SPLA will provide protection for them against the neighboring Dinka and Murle militias during their dry-season migration.

SSDF Warlord Begins Talks

¶5. Gabriel Tang, self-proclaimed commissioner of Jonglei's Fangak County and one of the largest holdouts

from the Juba Declaration, has agreed to come to Juba for negotiations with the GoSS on Saturday, March 11.

Land Dispute Sparks Violence Near Bentiu

¶16. Also in Jonglei state, UNMIS reports that some tribal fighting has erupted between local chiefs in Bentiu and Phillip Thon Leek, governor of the state, after the governor was given some land claimed by the tribes. Although there have been several injuries, no deaths have been reported.

MDTF Begins Operations

¶17. CG Juba officials met with Ron Isaacson, local director of the World Bank's Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF), on March 8. Isaacson reported that the MDTF made its first disbursement on March 7 to buy UN hospital kits to distribute to southern clinics. He expects the kits to arrive on March 10. He said that a request for bids to construct schools would be out soon, and that bids for road construction were currently being reviewed by the ministry, and that he expected work to begin by the end of April. One of the biggest challenges for the GoSS will be ensuring that only legitimate companies are given work as he expects dozens of construction companies to crop up in Juba soon. He believes each ministry needs at least two technical procurement experts to review bids and prepare contracts, saying that only a few, notably the Department of Education, are really organized enough

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to begin operations.

International Women's Day in Juba

¶18. On March 8, Juba celebrated International Women's Day with an event that included singing, dancing, and speeches from prominent ministers and southern leaders. Key speakers were the GoSS Under Secretary for Gender, Social Welfare and Religious Affairs Peter Sukole Buni, Governor of Bahr el-Jebel Clement Wani Konga, GoSS Minister of Information Sampson Kwaje, GoSS Minister of Justice Michael Makuai, and Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly Speaker James Wani Igga. Speakers pledged themselves to protecting women's rights, ensuring equal access to jobs and education, and upholding the commitment to have a minimum of 25 percent female representation at all levels of the GoSS. The two leading female ministers, Mary Kiden and Rebecca Garang, were scheduled to speak, but cancelled at the last moment.

British Police NGO Discuss Training

¶19. Officials from CG Juba met with the British government contractors who are training police in Juba. They explained that their program has been working to provide basic management, training, and presentation skills to police leaders. The group, all retired British law enforcement, described their program as a basic start, short of anything that could be called train-the-trainer. For the coming year, they hoped to expand their work with the police and begin some work with the south's traditional court system, which handles most of the region's legal cases.

WHITAKER